



**bazaarvoice™**

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## **The value of authenticity: Two thirds of shoppers prefer real customer photos from brands on social media, over professional shots**

**Over half (51%) of global consumers agree social media influences purchases, and 65% find the availability of previous customer photos on social media and websites essential in their purchase decision**

AUSTIN, Texas, Jan. 26, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Research from Bazaarvoice](#), the leading provider of product reviews and user-generated content (UGC) solutions, reveals visual and social user generated content is driving online retail purchases. The new report, 'A picture's worth a thousand purchases', finds that in addition to social media, almost three quarters (74%) of consumers prefer to see previous customers' photos and videos on brand and retailer websites, rather than professionally shot images. The findings, based on responses from 8,000+ consumers across Australia, Canada, France, Germany, UK and US, also reveal 62% of consumers are more likely to buy if they can view both photo and video content from previous customers.

Joe Rohrllich, CRO, Bazaarvoice comments, "Relatable voices commenting on and reviewing a product instill trust in a brand and product amongst other consumers online. The more realistic and authentic audiences feel the review content is, the more confident they become when deciding to make a purchase."

### **Visual driving social commerce**

As the [most used social media network globally](#), Facebook is also the most popular destination when it comes to influencing purchases (25%) and the most likely social platform for consumers to purchase a product on (26%). Amongst 18-34 year-olds, however, Instagram is the most popular destination, with 31% using it as their main source of inspiration and 27% saying it is the most likely place for them to buy.

Younger shoppers demonstrate a particularly strong preference for visual UGC on social media, as 73% of 18-34 year-olds prefer it when brands use visual UGC for social media outreach compared to an average of 64% across other age groups.

Shoppable images and videos are the type of content most likely to influence buying choices on social media (19%), ahead of video advertising (14%) and posts from followed brands (13%), suggesting rich content and the ease of buying on-platform are now critical in the customer journey.

Fresh content is everything, however. Many want to see new visual UGC content from brands on social media more frequently than they do on websites – almost half (47%) of consumers want to see new UGC content on social media at least 2-3 times a week, with 10% of those expecting updates multiple times a day.

### **All in the details**

Visual UGC is most important for products that are typically higher in value, as consumers seek evidence and certainty about its quality, as well as the accuracy of the description before buying. For over a third of consumers (36%), technology and electronics is the most important category for reviewing photos and videos from other customers prior to purchase.

Rohrlich comments, “Visual content shared by previous customers can give shoppers confidence to click the ‘buy’ button and reduce basket abandonment. It’s the best way to demonstrate online how the product fits or works, and can help potential customers imagine how they would use the product in their own lives.”

When it comes to trusting the authenticity of a review when making a purchase, the quality of other customer reviews is the top priority (45%) compared to how recently a review was posted (32%) or the number of reviews a product has from previous customers (23%).

Quality is in the eye of the beholder, however. For 1 in 5 consumers (21%), a quality review is judged to be one that includes photos and videos as well as text, more so than a well written review with good spelling and grammar (16%) or a review that clearly states when a product was purchased (11%).

### **Keeping it real**

Rohrlich, concludes, “The honesty and credibility of seeing other people’s real life photos and videos makes visual user generated content infinitely more valuable than a product description or professional photos. By enabling visual content from previous customers - as well as text-based reviews - on their platforms and social media, brands and retailers can turn a one dimensional customer experience into a dynamic one, that will simultaneously drive consumers to purchase. The trends across age groups suggest that those most engaged with online shopping - young shoppers - are the ones that find visual UGC most important. There is a huge opportunity for brands and retailers to stand out to these consumers with visual and social content.”

### **Methodology**

The research was commissioned by Bazaarvoice and conducted in November & December 2020 by Savanta among 8,051 consumers from the UK, US, Canada, France, Germany and Australia.

### **About Bazaarvoice**

Thousands of the world’s leading brands and retailers trust Bazaarvoice technology, services, and expertise to drive revenue, extend reach, gain actionable insights, and create loyal advocates. Bazaarvoice’s extensive global retail, social, and search syndication network, product-passionate community, and enterprise-level technology provide the tools brands and retailers need to create smarter shopper experiences across the entire customer journey.

Founded in 2005, Bazaarvoice is headquartered in Austin, Texas, with offices in North America, Europe, and Australia. For more information, visit [www.bazaarvoice.com](http://www.bazaarvoice.com)

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